The Builder.

No. CCCCXXX.

*SATURDAY, MAY 3, 1851.*

THE Industrial Exhibition of all Nations has been opened, under the happiest circumstances, and without the occurrence, so far as we have heard, of a single accident. The sun shone gloriously, as it usually does when our Queen intends coming out, and thousands and hundreds of thousands of persons lined the roads to see her Majesty pass. The scene inside the extraordinary building which has been prepared for the occasion was beyond description, and will not speedily be forgotten by those who had the good fortune to be present. A double row of seats on each side of the nave and transept, and others in the galleries, were filled with elegantly dressed women (equal to competition with the world), backed up by crowds of male visitors, and in the centre were other masses, forming two passages, one on each side of the nave, along which the procession passed. The dais and canopy were on the north side of the nave, at the junction with the transept. The braying of the trumpets, the swelling organs, the national anthem from a thousand throats, the declaration that the Exhibition was opened, and the universal hubbub and congratulation after this, are all still in our ears, and prevent us from doing anything now beyond noting the event. We shall, of course, pay many visits to the collection, and notwithstanding its numerous special recorders, shall doubtless find new matter for our readers' information. Sincerely glad are we that no untoward event, not even a dark cloud, occurred to lessen the success of the day, and we earnestly trust that the results of the event may be good, universal, and lasting. And having said thus much, we will end our brief memorandum of what will be a world-famous event, with one of the quotations happily selected for the official catalogue by the Prince, commending to all the truth it teaches:—"The progress of the human race, resulting from the common labour of all men, ought to be the final object of the exertion of each individual. In promoting this end, we are carrying out the will of the great and blessed God."

## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ART-UNION OF LONDON.

ACCORDING to our custom we record the proceedings at the annual general meeting of this important corporation. It was held on Tuesday, the 28th, in the Theatre Royal Lyceum, which was filled with visitors.

The Right Hon. Lord Monteagle took the chair, and

Mr. G. Godwin, F.R.S. then read the following

REPORT.

The Art-Union of London has now been in operation fifteen years, and during that time has expended, in the dissemination of works of art and the encouragement of artists, more than one hundred and fifty thousand pounds.

In the first year of its establishment 489*l.* were raised with difficulty. The rapid increase of the subscription list gave most satisfactory evidence of the public appreciation of the objects of the Institution, and since the second year the annual receipts have been reckoned by thousands. About two hundred thousand engravings, many thousand etchings and wood-cuts, and a large number of paintings by living artists, statuettes, bronzes, medals, and other works of art, have been distributed far and wide. The effect of the association (it is not too much to say), in inducing a love of art, and interesting the mass of the people in the progress of art, is traceable all over the kingdom, and throughout the British dependencies abroad.

The subscriptions for the present year, interfered with in a degree by the pre-occupation of the public mind by the great event of the times, amount to the sum of 11,470*l.* 4*s.*, the proposed appropriation of which will be presently stated.

Every subscriber is entitled (as you are aware), to receive one of two line engravings, "The Villa of Lucullus," or "The Burial of Harold," together with an illustrated edition of Goldsmith's "Traveller." Impressions of the first-named engraving have been distributed to those who gave that the preference. "The Burial of Harold," and the "Traveller," will be ready for distribution in a few weeks.

The Council have added to the series of illustrations of "The Traveller," a portrait of Goldsmith, and have reason to believe that the volume will be found very satisfactory. They owe thanks to Mr. Stanfield, R.A., for the presentation of the two original drawings from which his illustrations for the work were made on the wood.

The engraving of "The Entry into Jerusalem," due to the subscribers of 1849, and the designs illustrating "The Seven Ages," due to the subscribers of 1850, have been delivered to them since the date of the last report.

"The Piper," engraved by Mr. Edward Goodall, is finished and ready for press. "Richard Cœur de Lion" is approaching completion, in the hands of Mr. Shenton. The plate of "Queen Philippa interceding for the Burgesses of Calais" has been greatly delayed by the ill-health of the engraver. The Council adopt all the measures in their power to obtain the prompt execution of the engravings determined on, and to prevent disappointment, but are unable, without the co-operation of the artists employed, always to ensure the desired result.

The plate of "The Crucifixion," which was intrusted to Mr. W. Finden, should have been delivered to the Council, according to agreement, in December, 1849. To prevent disappointment to the subscribers, it would be desirable not to appropriate impressions from engravings until they are actually ready for delivery; but this course would involve an amount of responsibility of which the subscribers generally are scarcely aware. For example, in the case of the four engravings last mentioned,—by the time these plates are finished, and before beginning to print, an expenditure of 3,670*l.* will have been made, of which, of course, if the prints are reserved for future years, not one shilling is as yet subscribed. The members, in justice to the Council, should bear this fact in mind, that the whole of the amount subscribed each year, with the exception of the small per centage required by the charter to be set aside for the provision of a gallery hereafter, is divided amongst the members of that year.

The bronzes in *basso relievo*, "The Death of Boadicea," have been delivered to the prize-holders. The engraved design "The Entry into Jerusalem," by Mr. Hancock, will be produced in bronze in similar style for some future year. The same artist has prepared for the Council a second design in *basso relievo*, "Christ led to Crucifixion." A *fac simile* engraving of this will be made for subscribers of a future year, and will serve as a companion to "The Entry into Jerusalem."

For the ensuing year the Council have fortunately succeeded in obtaining a fine plate, engraved by Mr. Holl, after the picture by Mr. W. P. Frith, A.R.A., called "An English Merrymaking a Hundred Years ago." This is a large and costly work, thoroughly national in its character, is ready to go to press, and will, it is hoped, prove acceptable to the subscribers generally.

The Flaxman Medal, undertaken by Mr. Wyon, R.A., on the failure of the artist to whom it was first intrusted, and the Inigo Jones Medal, in the hands of Mr. Carter, have been delayed by the other engagements of the artists.

For the contemplated Iron Taxea, a subject modelled in low relief by Mr. Edward W. Wyon, from a Greek design, has been produced in metal, and will be placed in the hands of the caster forthwith. Twenty examples of this will form part of the present distribution.

With the sum set apart in the year 1850 for the purchase of works of art by the prize-holders themselves, 109 paintings and drawings were obtained, ranging in cost from 400*l.* to 10*l.*

The Council have again to note with regret that sculpture was not selected by any prize-holder.

In connection with this branch of art, to the importance of an extended encouragement of which the Council have often directed attention, an advertisement was issued in September last, offering, on the part of the Corporation, premiums of 100*l.* and 50*l.* respectively, for the first and second best model in plaster of a single figure, fitted to be afterwards produced in bronze. In reply to this, forty statuettes were sent in. By arrangement with the Executive Committee for the management of the Industrial Exhibition, a selection from these, twenty-four in number, have been deposited in the Great Building in Hyde-park. The Council believing that many unwise and unjust decisions in artistic competitions would have been prevented if the works submitted had been publicly shown previously to the award being made, have resolved to suspend their decision in this case until after the opening of the great Exhibition.

It wants but a few hours to this great event,—to the realisation of the idea put forth by the Consort of our gracious Queen, which will have the effect of bringing nations together, and showing under one roof the industrial arts of the greater part of the civilised world. From this peaceful battle-field it may be reasonably expected all will retire gainers. The general level of the national mind will be raised by it: the comfort, intelligence, and well-being of all will be advanced.

Amongst the minor but still valuable results of the Exhibition, will be the striking illustration it will afford of the importance, even in a pecuniary point of view, of making a knowledge of art general. For many years, as a reference to past Reports will show, the Council of the Art-Union of London have strenuously endeavoured to impress this truth; and should England appear to less disadvantage in matters of design, as compared with our continental neighbours, than some expect, we may with justice claim for the Association the merit of having contributed to that result.

The death of his Royal Highness the late Duke of Cambridge, president, is a loss that will be deplored by every member of this corporation, and especially by those who know best the kind readiness with which his Royal Highness ever strove to further its interests,—and never more so, or with more effect, than when its existence was threatened. The Council have a grateful sense of the assistance which was at all times afforded them by his Royal Highness, and deeply lament the loss that has been sustained.

Death has deprived the Art-Union of another early, earnest, and distinguished friend,—the late Marquis of Northampton, a vice-president of the corporation, who was ever ready to assist by his presence and advice.

The present Marquis of Northampton, who, as a member of the Council when Lord Compton, rendered efficient service to the Corporation, has been transferred, with his lordship's approval, to the list of vice-presidents.

The retiring members of council are C. H. Beauclerk, Esq., W. Leaf, Esq., and the Rt. Hon. Thomas Wyse. To fill the vacancies thus caused, and by the removal of Lord Northampton, the Rt. Hon. the Lord Londesborough,

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